AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-132. (cancelled)

133. (currently amended) A plasmid comprising a heterologous *pir* gene having at least one mutation in the *pir* gene DNA binding region, wherein the at least one mutation is chosen from the 114C mutation, the 100B mutation, and the 201C mutation, and wherein the heterologous *pir* gene having at least one mutation in the *pir* gene DNA binding region encodes a π protein that activates a conditional origin of replication.

134. (previously presented) The plasmid of claim 133, further comprising at least one mutation in the *pir* gene leucine zipper-like motif.

135. (previously presented) The plasmid of claim 133, further comprising a mutation in the *pir* gene copy number control region.

136. (currently amended) The plasmid of claim 133, wherein the conditional origin of replication is ~~derived~~ from ~~a~~ bacterial plasmid R6K.

137. (previously presented) The plasmid of claim 133, wherein the mutation in the DNA binding region is the 114C mutation.

138. (previously presented) The plasmid of claim 133, wherein the mutation in the DNA binding region is the 100B mutation.

139. (previously presented) The plasmid of claim 133, wherein the mutation in the DNA binding region is the 201C mutation.

140. (cancelled)

141. (currently amended) A prokaryotic recombinant host cell comprising a heterologous *pir* gene and a DNA molecule comprising a heterologous gene encoding a protein, a selection gene, a target region for a site-specific recombinase, and a conditional origin of replication whose functionality in a prokaryotic host cell requires a π protein, wherein the heterologous *pir* gene comprises at least one mutation in the *pir* gene DNA binding region, wherein the at least one mutation is chosen from the 114C mutation, the 100B mutation, and the 201C mutation, and wherein the heterologous *pir* gene having at least one mutation in the *pir* gene DNA binding region encodes a π protein that activates the conditional origin of replication.

142. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the heterologous *pir* gene further comprises at least one mutation in the leucine zipper-like motif.

143. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the heterologous *pir* gene further comprises a mutation in the *pir* gene copy number control region.

144. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the heterologous *pir* gene is in a plasmid.

145. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the heterologous *pir* gene is in the genome of the host cell.

146. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the mutation in the DNA binding region is the 114C mutation.

147. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the mutation in the DNA binding region is the 100B mutation.

148. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the mutation in the DNA binding region is the 201C mutation.

149-151. (cancelled)

152. (previously presented) The plasmid of claim 135, wherein the mutation in the copy number control region is *pir* 116.

153. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 143, wherein the mutation in the copy number control region is *pir* 116.

154. (currently amended) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell of claim 141, wherein the conditional origin of replication is ~~derived~~ from ~~a~~ bacterial plasmid R6K.

155. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell according to claim 141 further comprising a gene comprising an amber mutation.

156. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell according to claim 141, wherein said host cell is deficient for the gene endA.

157. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell according to claim 141, wherein said host cell is deficient for the gene traD.

158. (previously presented) The prokaryotic recombinant host cell according to claim 141, wherein said host cell further comprises a mutated recA gene.